

**26 June 2023**

## **257<sup>th</sup> COMMISSION MEETING**

### **Held in the Commission's Offices, Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8ED and via Teams**

**Present:** Eddie Rooney, Acting Chair  
Helen Henderson  
Jonathan Kearney  
David Lavery  
Stephen White

**In attendance:** David Russell, Chief Executive  
Rebecca Magee, Executive Assistant to the Chief  
Commissioner and Chief Executive  
Rhyannon Blythe, Director (Legal Services)  
Colin Caughey, Director (Advice to Government,  
Research and Investigations)  
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel &  
Corporate Affairs)  
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and  
Communications)  
Éilis Haughey, Director (Human Rights after EU  
Withdrawal) (Agenda Items 1-9 and 11-12)

## **1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

1.1 Apologies were received from the Boardroom Apprentice.

## **2. Minutes of the 255<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting**

2.1 The minutes of the 255<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting held on 30 May

2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action: Minutes of the 256<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website.**

### **3. Chief Commissioner's Report**

3.1 The Chief Commissioner's Report was noted.

### **4. Commissioners' Report**

4.1 Commissioner Lavery reported on an upcoming event the Law Society is hosting on the Legacy Legislation that the Chief Commissioner will be invited to speak at.

4.2 Commissioner Henderson reported that she had been awarded a Fellowship with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for Education for a Contemporary Society.

4.3 Commissioner Rooney reported on the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting. It was noted that main focus of the meeting was the Audit Completion reports, which were all satisfactory and the approval of the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.

### **5. Chief Executive's Report**

5.1 The Chief Executive provided an update to Commissioners on the business case for additional in-year funding which is still with HM Treasury for consideration.

5.2 The Chief Executive reported that the Commission has been awarded a grant from ENNHRI for Human Rights and Business on public procurement. The Commission will partner with Queens University on the work.

### **6. Independent Review – 6-month review**

6.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on the 6-month review of the Independent Review with no formal response

from the NIO until the Business Case (see 5.1) is approved.

**Action: Chief Commissioner to write to Secretary of State.**

6.2 The Chief Executive reported that work internally is progressing on the KPI Framework and that teams will work towards new performance tools to begin in September with a few to quarterly reporting.

## **7. KPI Template**

7.1 The Chief Executive provided an overview of the KPI template document.

7.2 Commissioners noted the KPI template and that the template will be used for reporting from September onwards.

## **8. Finance Report**

8.1 Commissioners noted the Finance Report and the projected expenditure to the end of the financial year.

## **9. Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23**

9.1 Commissioners were presented with the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.

9.2 Commissioners noted that the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 had been approved at the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 23 June.

9.3 Commissioners approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 subject to small amendments.

## **10. Engagement and Communications Update and DM Campaign**

10.1 The Director (Engagement and Communications) provided an update on Engagement and Communications, including:

- The launch of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Post Primary Schools in Northern Ireland: A Compelling Case for Reform Investigation report on 12 June.
- Press relating to the RSE Investigation launch including recorded interviews with the BBC and UTV.
- Refugee week – the Commission took a table at the picnic event on 24<sup>th</sup> June. The Chief Commissioner also recorded a video for the Red Cross.

10.3 Commissioners noted the press clippings.

## **11. Dedicated Mechanism Functions Report**

11.1 The Director (Human Rights after EU Withdrawal) provided an update on the work of the Dedicated Mechanism including:

- Further engagement with the EU Specialist Committee on Article 2.
- The launch of the Dedicated Mechanism Annual Report on 5 July in Ulster Museum.
- Ongoing work on the first draft of the Charter report and the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the Frontier Workers report.
- The Chief Commissioners of the three Commissions giving evidence before the Oireachtas on 29 June.

## **12. Legal functions report**

12.1 The Director (Legal Services) provided an update on the following:

- Nealon and Hallam v UK (Miscarriage of justice compensation – ECtHR case) – a third-party intervention has been submitted. The Solicitor will be present for the hearing in Strasbourg.
- JR123 (Rehabilitation of Offenders Order) – awaiting decision.
- F/S (Application for Retrospective Anonymity in an Employment Tribunal Decision) – an intervention was submitted and the hearing has taken place in June. Decision is awaited.

- CW (EUSS) – an opinion has been sought from Counsel and will be shared in due course.
- Own Motion (Challenge to NIHE policy on intimidation points) – still awaiting proceedings. An opinion from Counsel is expected this week.

12.2 The Director (Legal Services) updated Commissioners on the SPUC/ SPUC 2 Appeal (Challenge to the Abortion Regulations 2021) litigation. The case seems to be moving in a constitutional direction now and nothing further can be done on this until Leave is granted.

## **13. Policy Functions Report**

13.1 The Director (Advice to Government, Research and Investigations) provided an update on consultations, legislation and international reporting which included:

- The Northern Ireland Office, Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill report stage took place last week and today. There were several mentions of the Commission.
- Legal Migration Bill – positively commented on by Lord Weir.
- RSE Investigation – the launch took place on 12 June.
- UNCRPD – The Committee is follow-up on social security is in August. NIHRC, EHRC and SHRC will be reporting to the Committee. The IMNI Commissioners will be approving the statement.

13.2 The Director (Advice to Government, Research and Investigations) provided an update on the research in to Drug Use. Due to resources this has yet to be launched. A launch in the summer may take place and the research shared with stakeholders.

## **15. Any other Business**

15.1 There was nothing to report.

The meeting closed at 11.15pm